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A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING,

IN THE

Royal Chapel at St. *James's*,

On *March* the 2^d, the first *Sunday*
in Lent, 1717.

K. Stretwood
By WILLIAM Lord Bishop of Ely.

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SERMON

KING

Royal Chapel at St James's

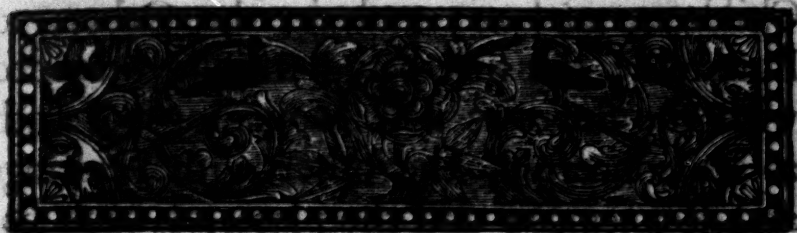
On March the 24th the 1st Sunday
in Lent 1719.

By WILLIAM Lord Bishop of Ex.

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ECCLES. Chap. VII. ver. 4.

The heart of the Wise is in the house of Mourning, but the heart of Fools is in the house of Mirth.



BECAUSE the Pleasures and Felicities of Life are very much overballanced by its Evils and Misfortunes, the Wise Man had said, ver. 1. *that the Day of Death was better than the Day of ones Birth; the former delivering us from all those Vanities and Miseries to which the latter brings us, and lets us in. And because when he says in the second Verse, that it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting, 'tis thought he refers in One, to that which*

answered of old, to the Christening of Children, *with us*; and, in the Other, to Funerals; the first being usually attended with the Sorrows and Mournings of such as are concern'd, the other with Feasting and Rejoicings; and the places of each being properly enough called, *the Houses of Mirth and Mourning*. In reference therefore to this, the Words of the Text import thus much; it is more for a Man's Use and Service to frequent such Assemblies as will afford him Occasion to consider the Vanity and perishing Condition of all things in this World, than such as only give him present Mirth and Lightness. *The Heart of the Wise is in the House of Mourning*: a Man is made wiser and better, by being exercised about sad and serious things; and he who is already wise, will think on, and consider the Miseries and Misfortunes, the Dangers and Calamities to which the Life of Man is subject. Whereas they who are vain and foolish, think only on their present Ease and Pleasure. *The Heart of Fools is in the House of Mirth*; they are intent on nothing else; never considering where, or in what sort of World they live, nor what may possibly befall them; and

consequently make no manner of Provision for themselves.

But to do Right to this, and all such general Sentences (of which the *Books of Wisdom* are made up) we must be sure never to understand them in their strictest literal sense, which is seldom exactly true, never useful: but we must take them in a sober and restrained sense, and such as will best answer to the End and Purpose, for which they were unquestionably written; the propagating and promoting Virtue and Religion. It is not likely to be true, that all who are wise, should be always meditating on, or conversing with sorrowful Subjects: nor is it true, that they who resort to the House of Mirth, should be *Fools* for so doing. We are made for Joy and Gladness; the being pleas'd and living happily, is the Design of GOD in his creating us; a good Being could intend nothing less to be the Portion of the Work of his Hands; for wherefore should He make a Creature to be miserable? to make a Creature *capable* of being miserable, through his own default and Obstinacy, and foolish Choice, will argue neither want of Wisdom nor Goodness, if he is also capable of and designed

signed *for* Happiness : but to *intend* the Misery of the Creature, and to create him for that Purpose, is a thing so far from being done by GOD, that surely He is not capable of doing it ; 'tis a direct Contradiction to the natural Notions we have of the Divine Benignity and Goodness. Nor is it thus with Respect to the World to come only, but to this also wherein we live : No Man that has but tolerably worthy thoughts of GOD, can think any less, than that He certainly design'd the proper Happiness of all his Creatures ; and that when they fail of it, there is some Fault somewhere or other, or some Misfortune by some Accident not to be prevented, or foreseen, the Permission of both which detracts neither from the Wisdom nor Goodness of the great Creator and Conserver of the World. Now, this being own'd, that GOD does certainly intend the Happiness of every Man, and that this Happiness consists entirely in the ease of Body and ease of Mind, which we may call Pleasure and Satisfaction, 'tis certain that GOD design'd we should be pleas'd and satisfy'd ; and therefore *Mirth*, as it is the outward Expression of this inward Satisfaction, can
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neither be foolish nor unworthy of a Wife Man, nor yet offensive to GOD. The Preacher says himself, *Chap. ii. v. 24. There is nothing better for a Man, than that he should eat and drink, and make his Soul enjoy Good in his labour; this also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. And iii. 22. Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a Man should rejoice in his own Works; for that is his Portion; and who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?* Our Saviour did himself resort to the House of Feasting, and that to a Marriage, which is generally of the freest sort of such Assemblings. And, lastly, who can imagine Joy and Gladness to be in it self displeasing to GOD, the Desire of which is so innate to Man, that without the Hope and Prospect of it, nothing would tempt him to endure to live: but above all, since it is made the motive and allurements to the doing our Duty in this Life, as well as it is to be our Everlasting Recompence in that to come? And tho' the Pleasures of the other Life, will surely be of another sort and kind than those of this, yet there is little Reason to think, that the pleasures of this Life, which are natural and proper
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to Us, are not as inoffensive in themselves, when well and rightly used, as those in the other World will be, when we enjoy them. It is not therefore Pleasure that is in it self unlawful; nor is it in it self unlawful, to be always pleased and easy, were it possible; if such our Pleasure and Satisfaction do neither hinder us from performing any Duty we owe to GOD, our Neighbour, or our selves; nor put us upon doing any thing forbidden by Reason or Revelation, *i. e.* no Pleasure can become unlawful, that is consistent with our Innocence. The lawfulness and innocency therefore of both our love and use of Pleasures, must come to be determined of, and govern'd by the Laws of GOD, commanding or forbidding such and such Particulars: and whosoever reconciles his Pleasures with his Compliance and Obedience to those Rules, shall have them safe and innocent, both with Respect to the Kind, Degree, and Measure of them: He shall be sure never to fix on Objects that are not proper and allowed, nor continue to use them any longer than is consistent with the Discharge of all his other Duties: and when he has secured these Ends, he
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may resort to the House of Mirth, without the hazarding either his Wisdom or his Virtue. Now, let it be allowed, that God who made us all, and gave us all those Powers and Faculties, by which we are capable of being pleas'd and entertain'd, and also made those Objects which we find so proper to please and entertain, and with Design (for ought that appears against it) to please and entertain those Faculties and Powers, let it be granted that He does not, as He need not, envy to us any Pleasure, and we shall quickly see, how reasonable it is, that all such Objects as are forbidden us to pursue and fix upon, should be indeed forbidden: we shall discern how improper it would be, how mischievous and hurtful to the World, that they should be allowed as to the Kind: and as to the Degree and Measure of using Pleasures lawful and allowed, we shall also see how fit it is, that the excess of them should be restrain'd by God, when it is to the hindrance of things better and more useful, the Discharge of necessary Duties. And in this sense, every one will see the Meaning and the Truth of what the Wise Man here says, that *the Heart of the Fool is in the House of Mirth.*

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'Tis certainly for want of Reason and Understanding, that People place their Hearts and Affections on Objects unlawful and forbidden: or that they pursue things lawful and allowed, in such immoderate measure, as hinders them from doing what they were otherwise obliged to do.

This being then the Case with respect to the *House of Mirth*, and needful to be presupposed, in order to the avoiding many Absurdities, that would arise from the general condemnation of it, it will be easier, in the next Place, to understand the other Part of the Text, *the Heart of the Wise is in the House of Mourning*. And first, the Vanities and Vexations of this Life, are generally enow, to force the happiest of us all, not only to resort to, but frequent the House of Mourning, *i. e.* to give us Sorrows and Afflictions in abundance. The certain, and the accidental Evils to which we are liable, are almost numberless; but the Wisdom of Men being rather seen in shunning, and delivering themselves from them, than chusing and continuing in them, it remains, that the Heart be *to be made wise* by them, and improve under them: the House of Mourning is to be the School of Wisdom;
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a Place not lovely and desirable enough for us to choose, as being full of Damp, and Shade, and Objects unagreeable, but such as when we are driven to by Necessity, we may and should improve to our Advantage.

Our Pains and Sickneses may teach us many Profitable Lessons; they may and should occasion us to inquire at what Door those Evils entred on us; and if we find it was by Intemperance and Excess of any kind, it may help to repress a growing Luxury, and bring us again to Moderation and Sobriety. And if they came by Accident, by Negligence, or by the Providence of God, we know not how, yet they may teach us to compassionate those who endure the like Miseries, but without the like Assistances, Support and Comforts, that our Condition may afford us, and cause us to be charitable, and to contribute by Advice, and Help, and suitable Supplies, to the making them as easy under their Sufferings, as they can be.

The disastrous Accidents also that befall our Estates, that deprive us of our Offices, our Places, our Inheritance, or the Fruits of our Industry and Labour, and send us to the House of Mourning, may also be improved to our Advantage, by causing us

to call to mind, how we have used our Wealth and Power, in our Prosperity, whether with Insolence and Injustice, with Vexation and Oppression, or a neglect at least of doing any good. They may help us to contract our Desires, and bring them within a reasonable compass; they may shew us the Vanity of our inordinate sollicitude, in making Provision for the future, which so many little Accidents can disappoint: and they may teach us too, with what a little Cost our true Necessities may be supplied; and what a point of Wisdom it would be, to be content with what we *feel* we want, and not what we but *fancy*, when we are much at ease and wanton.

The Losses also of our Children, near Relations, and Friends, that do so often drive us to the House of Mourning, may teach us also many Points of Wisdom, useful and needful to be learn'd. What pleasing Scenes do we erect in our Imaginations, whilst we are well, and compassed with those Objects of our Love! What mighty Hopes do we conceive, and what great Expectations do we raise within us! What distant Joys and Satisfaction do we propose and promise to ourselves, and give Them;
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in our Fancy, Years, and Strength, and Health, and Wit, and Honours and Employments, and every thing we like and love, which they shall never have, but die away upon the sudden, Unaccountably. There is nothing in which the Imagination is more befooled, and the weak Heart impos'd upon, than by those fond Hopes of future Satisfaction and Delight, which we treasure up in Vessels so perishable as humane Bodies. A thousand natural and a thousand accidental Evils, may, and do quickly put an end to the most valued Lives, and all the vain Amusements that respected them. This is a thing so fixt and sure, that few, if any, that were ever capable of being afflicted in this Point, but have indeed been so: this is the forest, but withal the commonest Evil under the Sun; these sort of Sufferings are the sharpest, yet most unavoidable of all others: No Losses do so overwhelm the Mind, and leave us destitute of all Relief, as these, by bidding us despair immediately; wherea the Rest still leave us *Hope* to live upon, by which we please and cheat our selves into Belief, that things may mend upon our hands. This is the widest Gate of all the House of Mourning, and almost

almost always open. But 'tis great pity we should pass so often through it, without considering and observing, that much of all those Sorrows that oppress us upon these Occasions, is laid upon our selves, not by our *natural* Tenderness and Sensibility, but by our artificial and acquired Weakness. Reason indeed plays but the Hypocrite, when she pretends to silence, by her Arguments, the Cries of Nature, her just Compassions, Sorrows, and Complaints upon her Losses; and truly, Religion has not much to do in such like Cases, and is not the most discreetly used, when brought to serve such Purposes. But when this is allowed, all must acknowledge, that to our natural Weakness, we also often add an artificial one; we strangely increase our natural Affections, by studied Fondnesses, unnecessary Kindness, and by Customs of Indulgence: instead of fortifying our selves by sober Considerations, and prudent Usages, we give all way to our Inclinations, and acquire, by Time, a niceness of Constitution, and a Sensibility that does not properly belong to us; and by these means we come to be more pain'd and miserable by much, than we need to be. The House of Mourning

is a proper Place to rectify these Errors and Miscarriages in, in order to prevent the like for the future; for there we feel the Uneasiness that our neglect of what is past has given us, and there may form our Resolutions to be wiser and kinder to ourselves than we have been, by placing our Affections, and managing them so for the time to come, that it may not be in the Power of so many Casualties, and certain Evils to give us such Disturbance and Inquietude, such Pain and inexpressible Concern: since 'tis so certain, that according to the undue Hopes we have entertain'd, will be our Disappointment and Defeat; and our imaginary Pleasures be followed by most real and substantial Grief and Misery.

They who have any thing to lose should learn these Lessons; for the Heart will be sad to no Purpose, if it will not be made wiser by its Sufferings; for it neither is, nor can be a Point of Wisdom, to afflict ones self, or willingly to be afflicted, unless it be in order to some Good, that is greater than the Ease we part with for it. So that the Heart is to be made Wise and exercise its Wisdom, in the House of Mourning, and turn its Sorrows and Misfortunes to the best

best account. And the House of Mourning is fitted, we see, to give us Opportunities of making these Improvements.

But because the Wisdom that is prais'd by *Solomon*, in all his Books, and to which he invites and exhorts all Men in general, is certainly the Wisdom of being Virtuous and Religious, of fearing God and keeping his Commandments (there being indeed no other Point of Wisdom, of which *All Men* are capable, and which is fit for all) it will be requisite to see, in the next Place, how the Heart is capable of improving in this holy Wisdom, *in the House of Mourning*. And first, the Occasions that bring us to that House, do generally give us a serious Frame of Thought, our Minds are more compos'd and fix'd, call'd home, as it were, and disengag'd from all those pleasing Entertainments, that hindred them from settling where they often should: the busy fluttering Spirits that in our gaiety and ease transported us from one diverting Object to another, are now evaporated and laid, and we are much at leisure and dispos'd to fix our Hearts and Thoughts upon the things that most concern us. And when we are thus reduc'd to this considerate Temper

per and sobriety of Mind, the next good thing that we are put to do, is to reflect upon the Conduct of our Life past, to call to mind the Sins and Offences that we have committed. This indeed we are constrain'd to do, and cannot easily avoid the doing : it would be hard for any one to recollect the Actions of his Life past, without the meeting with a great many Sins and Offences : and then is it a proper time to set upon repenting of them, for then is the Mind humbled and brought low, then is the Heart softned and made more susceptible of Impressions, then is the Memory more distinct and faithful, then is the Conscience more awakened and disturbed, and then more apprehensive of its Danger ; all which are natural Dispositions to Repentance : and therefore Afflictions are the Instruments, and Means GOD often uses to bring us to it. Whilst Men are healthy and at ease in their Concerns, they are either heedless or obdurate, and either way regardless of their Hazard, and Impenitent : but urged by some severe and sharp Remembrancer, some painful Loss, or heavy Disappointment, they melt and grow more tractable and more considerate. *When He slew them, then They*

sought him, and turned them quickly and enquired after God, saith the Psalmist of the Jews; the gentle Methods He had taken, mov'd them not, but some of his avenging Visitations stirr'd up their Remembrance, and brought them for the present to Themselves, and a sense of their Duty: and of himself he saith, *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word*, cxix. 67. and ver. 71. *It is good for me, that I have been in Trouble, that I might learn thy Statutes*, i. e. remember them, and learn to observe them better for the future: and 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled*. He never could have said these things of Troubles and Afflictions, unless he had improv'd under them, and become wiser and better by them; unless he had made them the Opportunities of calling his Ways to Remembrance, and of repenting in earnest of his Sins; for doubtless Troubles and Afflictions are in themselves good for nothing, but very justly every ones Aversion. *No Chastening*, saith the Author to the Hebrews xii. 11. *for the present, seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of Righteousness unto them* which

which are exercised thereby. This is true of all Afflictions, come they from whence or whom they will, and with whatever End and Purpose ; they are none of them desirable, but all the contrary : unless they who are exercised thereby bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness, it is no matter from what hand they come ; the Chastnings of a Father are as the Wounds of an Enemy : the End and Purpose of him who inflicts them does not remove their Pain, nor make them less a Punishment. And therefore no body can make Advantage, or good use of Afflictions, but by being bettered and amended by them. It is this Improvement of them that gives these Sentences their Truth, that *it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting, for that is the End of all Men, and the living will lay it to his Heart ;* for if the Living do not take occasion thence to consider seriously of Death, and to prepare themselves for it, their going to the House of Mourning, is but so much Time, and Ease, and Labour, lost in fruitless Sufferings and Complaints. Sorrow, he also says, *is better than Laughter, because by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better ;* but if this do not follow, that will

be hardly true ; if the Heart be not indeed made better, Sorrow is but so much Trouble, uneasy and unuseful. And these things also shew, that when the Heart of the Wise is said to be in the House of Mourning, it is meant, that there is the Heart *to be made Wise*, and there to exercise its Wisdom; and that it never will be Wise, unless it make these Uses of its Losses and Afflictions.

But *the House of Mourning* signifying that State of Consideration, and serious grave Reflexion, into which our real Troubles bring us, as well as the Troubles themselves, the Heart of them that are already wise, may sometimes choose to enter into it, to the securing and continuing, as well as to the increasing of their Wisdom. A wise Man cannot fail of being often serious, thoughtful, and considerate : he will not only meet with many unavoidable Occasions of being so, but he will not always try to shun them, by turning aside into the House of Mirth and Feasting, altho' he may both enter, and abide there innocent. Misfortunes are so various and so frequent, that tho' a Wise Man will not live in constant expectation of them, yet he will hardly be surprized or suddenly oppressed by them; he

he will be watchful, and so keep them in his Mind, as things that may befall him, tho' at distance, and in some measure be prepar'd against them. Our natural Inclination, Bias, and Tendency to Pleasures is so strong, and the Corruption of our Heart so great, that if our Care be not proportionably great, we are in all the danger of the World, both of indulging to Excess, those that are lawful and allowed, to the neglect of our other Duties, and also of falling into those that are unlawful and forbidden, to the express Contempt of God's Commands. The Confines of Innocence are parted from those of Guilt, by a Line that is almost imperceptible, and very quickly transgress'd: And therefore unless we will be content to lay a voluntary Restraint upon our selves, and be Wise, without a Law, we are in too much hazard of Miscarrying. There is indeed, in such a World as we inhabit, in the midst of so many Temptations as we are encompass'd with, and with such Hearts within as are always ready to join our Enemies without, there is all the need in the World of being sober, thoughtful, and considerate, careful, diligent, and well employ'd, to keep our selves in tolerable Innocence, or to re-
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duce us to Repentance, when we have offended.

Under the sense of this their hazardous Estate, many good Christians did of old forsake the World, deny themselves a great many lawful Pleasures and Conveniencies of Life ; betook themselves to Solitude and close Retirement ; gave themselves up to assiduous Prayer, laborious Watchings, and underwent a great many painful Austerities, in macerating Fasts, and other Mortifications. They made to themselves *Houses of Mourning*, and dwelt much in them ; as well to bewail their past Offences, as to secure their Innocence and Virtue for the future. They did, in a word, intend hereby to make their Hearts better, and wise to Salvation. And if they placed no Merit in these things, but only took them up, as means which they thought useful to the attaining their great End, without imposing them on others, they ought to meet with neither Blame nor Censure. Every one is presumed to study and to understand his own Temper, Constitution and Necessities, best ; to know where they are feeblest, and in what Points they stand confirm'd and strong ; and therefore much must needs be left for every Body to deter-

determine for themselves ; and therefore they who spend more Time, and take more Pains to subdue their Desires, and keep themselves in good Order, than others do, are not rashly to accuse *those* others of Neglect or Breach of Duty ; nor should those others as rashly condemn *Them*, of needless Scruple and Superstition : for each may do what they find necessary for themselves, in order to the same good End.

But least our Fondness and Self-love, together with that littleness to enter upon any thing we apprehend uneasy, which most of us bear about us, should hinder or delay too long our undertaking that most necessary Work of Consideration, Recollection and Repentance, Our Church it self hath set apart, and consecrated a Time and Season proper for such Purpose, and hath prudentially prescribed to all her Children, Meditation, Prayer and Fasting, as the Means and Method of attaining that good End, which all of us pretend to aspire after. She hath erected, as it were, this temporary House of Mourning, wherein She would oblige us *annually* to enter, and to do those good Works, she fears would not be done without it, the making

making the Heart wiser and better; the calling to Mind our past Offences; the seriously bewailing and repenting of them; asking of GOD, with all Humility, his Pardon and Forgiveness; purposing steadfastly to lead a new and better Life; to follow the Commands of GOD, and from thenceforth to walk according to his Will: These are the Resolutions and the Works She would have us entertain our selves withal, *this sober Season*. Our Saviour passed whole Nights in Prayer, and fasted forty Days and forty Nights, as *Moses* and *Elias* did before Him; for wise and useful Purposes, no question; which yet it hath not pleased GOD to acquaint us with, or to discover to us. We know He did it, *for our sake*, but not for our Example, because it was a supernatural and miraculous Performance, and could not be followed by us; as neither were the *Jews* obliged to try to imitate their Lawgiver and Prophet; altho' they fasted often, as appears in the New Testament, in our Saviour's Days, when the Practice of it became a Pretence and Shew of great Sanctity, and a Veil of great Hypocrisy, covering bad Designs. But for the sake of this Example
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of our Lord, the number of forty Days was certainly pitch'd upon ; and plac'd on purpose, at this Season, before his Resurrection, to take in the Time of his Death and Sufferings, that those might be the especial Subjects of our Meditation. Not that we should spend that Time in vain and fruitless Sorrows, for those Wounds and Stripes by which our Souls are healed, and for that Death by which we are redeem'd from Misery (for we had mourn'd with Reason had they *not* been undergone) but that we should reflect in earnest on the Occasion and Necessity our Sins had made of such a Sacrifice, and learn to abhor ourselves in Dust and Ashes. Our Saviour says to every one, what heretofore he said to some good tender Women, *Weep not for me, but for your selves.* One cannot be insensible at the Recital and Remembrance of his Personal Sufferings : but all those Sorrows are produced by the meer Mechanism of Nature, and if they go no farther, are theatrical and useless, tho' very apt to impose upon our own selves ; since 'tis, we find, the easier task by much, to dissolve into Sighs, and Tears, and Lamentations, for having gratified our sinful Desires, than

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to subdue them, and deny them any farther satisfaction. The Mourning we are call'd to, is a serious and compos'd Frame of Mind, with which we are to enter into Disquisition, how we have pass'd the Time of our sojourning here; what we were sent into this World to do, and how we have perform'd it; to call to Mind, what in the heat and hurry of our Business and Diversions, we have either forgotten, or neglected to do; or what we have too inconsiderately done: what we have also done with choice, and a deliberate Malice, with Boldness and Presumption, against the sober Dictates of our Reason, against the soft and gentle Admonitions, or the most loud and terrible Rebukes of Conscience: and to consider withal, the fearful and amazing Hazards we have hereby expos'd our selves to, the Wrath of God, and what is consequent thereon: and those amazing Methods He hath also taken to cover us from that Wrath, and free us from those dreadful Consequences, the sending CHRIST into the World, to live for our Example and Instruction, and to die a painful Death for our Redemption; to offer up, upon the Cross, an all-sufficient

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ent Sacrifice, to reconcile us to the Father, to make Attonement and obtain Forgiveness, for all the Sins we shall repent us truly of, and leave ; and, when this World is at an end, to raise our Bodies from the Dust, as heretofore He did his own, and reunite them to their Souls, never to be again divided, but live in everlasting Happiness in Heaven. These are the Subjects, that the Wisdom of the Church advises us, to fix our Thoughts upon, at this particular Season, in order to the making the Heart wiser and better. And that we might attend more freely to these Matters, She advises *Abstinence*, and a prudent Retrenchment of all those Superfluities, that minister to Luxury more than Necessity ; by which the busy Spirits are composed and quieted ; the loose and scattered Thoughts are recollected and brought home, and such a serious sober Frame of Mind put on, that we can think with less Distraction, remember more exactly, pray with more Fervency, repent more earnestly, and resolve with more Deliberation on Amendment. These are the beneficial Fruits and Effects of a reasonable well-govern'd Abstinence,

as every one may find by their Experience.

Not that the Church, or any Wise Man, thinks, that there is any Virtue, or great matter, in any one's being thoughtful, sober, and abstemious, for five or six Weeks, and then returning to their usual Liberties and loose Practice; but that both of them are willing to believe and hope, that Men will take that Time to bethink themselves in earnest, and call their Ways to Remembrance, and, in it, form such Resolutions of Repenting of what is past, and of amending for the Time to come, as will certainly hold, and take Effect for ever after. This is the Intent and Purpose of all such sort of Prescriptions and Injunctions: and when they have taken Place effectually, there is an end of them: their primary Obligation ceases with their Necessity. But till that Work be done, it were adviseable for all, to take those Courses, that their Reason and their Experience tell them, are most proper and most likely to effect it. And therefore where the Heart wants to be made wiser and better, the House of Mourning, which may well be-

become the House of Wisdom, should not be neglected. And 'tis no small encouragement to think, that no one ever yet repented, either of entring, or continuing in, this House ; nor of the manner how he passed his Time, nor of the Resolutions he made in it ; nor of the Fruits of Righteousness which they produced.

But, to give *these Sayings* all the Force I can, I will make an End, with observing, That whether they admonish or rebuke, whether they invite or threaten, They are the Result of the greatest Wisdom that ever a meer Man was endued with ; and founded upon the fullest Experience that a Rich and powerful Prince (who made his Riches and his Power subservient to his Pleasures) could possibly have : and therefore will deserve to be considered. And altho' with all his Wisdom, he did not, because he would not, preserve Himself unspotted from the World, but poorly fell into the Snares of both living and dead Idols, and became thereby a very bad Example to the World ; yet has he made us some amends, (if we will hear Him) by his turning *Preacher* : for his last and best Judgment, was his Retraction and
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Repentance, of which this Book has evermore been thought an ample Evidence and Proof. And no Body can make any better use of it, nor hardly any other, than to believe what he says in it, to trust to his Experience, and to be wise at his Expence; who, after many vain Enquiries, and worse Experiments, to find wherein a Man's true Happiness consisted, found, with the Loss of all his Time, his Innocence, and Virtue, that it consisted not in any thing he had tried (all which he says was *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*) and therefore counsels all who would be truly Wise, and truly happy, to begin, where he himself but ended, with *fearing GOD, and keeping his Commandments.*



F I N I S.